

19 March 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

ATTENTION: Mr. Ray Garthoff

SUBJECT: Initiatives against Placing Nuclear Weapons in Space

1. This Agency concurs in the proposed course of action set forth in the draft memorandum for the President, subject: Initiatives against Placing Nuclear Weapons in Space. It is assumed that this course of action does not foreclose on our recommending the development of a comparable standby U.S. capability if Mr. Nitze's review determines that such a development is economically feasible.

2. Generally, we endorse the proposed "Remarks Concerning Bombardment Satellites" (Tab B) for use by the Secretary of State and other appropriate senior government officials in major policy addresses, with one reservation; i. e., we believe the statement plays into Soviet hands by emphasizing the psychological effects which would result from the placing of nuclear weapons in space. Conceding that such effects would verge on the traumatic, we question the wisdom of stressing this for Soviet consumption. Considering the Russian propensity for employing psychological warfare, it is possible that the Soviets might consider this an attractive scheme for reestablishing their military and technical stature and for bringing worldwide pressure on the West to make disarmament concessions in return for Soviet agreement to remove such weapons from orbit. We believe that the more aware the Soviets become of our recognition of the psychological importance of such an act, the greater the inducement will be to experiment with such a course of action in the hope that the psychological impact would assist them in achieving such objectives.

3. It is suggested that the greatest emphasis be placed on the increased risk of accidental war which would result from the introduction of bombardment satellites and the blatantly cynical and callous disregard for human welfare which is manifest in such an act. Secondarily, stress should be placed on the resultant escalation of the arms race (this is already effectively outlined in the proposed remarks paper although as a tertiary consideration).


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Finally, it should be emphasized that such action would sharply increase world tensions, but rather than engaging in a morbid examination of the psychological effects, the statement should convey a positive warning that such a development could only result in a hardening of the Free World position (including neutral nations) vis-a-vis the Soviet Bloc.

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HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
Deputy Director
(Research)

cc: State (2)
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